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A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING,

AT

Windsor-Castle,

AUGUST 15. 1675.

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Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty.

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SERMON
KING
WEDDING

Titus 1. 16.

They profeſs that they know God, but in Works they deny him: being abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good Work reprobate.

WHat a ſtrange kind of Medley were theſe! Do men gather Thorns of Vines, or Thiſtles of Figs? Seeing they profeſſed this Religion, why would not they practiſe it? Seeing they would not practiſe it, why did they profeſs it? This is not only to be wicked but abſurd too: diſobedient to God, but inconſiſtent with themſelves alſo. There was a muſing Monk that thought there needed only two things, an *Inquiſition* and a *Bedlam* to re-

form the whole World. Such as oppoſe the Articles of our Faith as falſe, he would have an Inquiſition for; but thoſe that acknowledge them to be true, and yet did not walk accordingly thoſe he would have ſent to *Bedlam*. But ſure the man was not aware how capacious that Place had need to be that was to hold all the bad Livers that are in Chriſtendom; if all thoſe muſt be looked upon as no other than Madmen and diſtracted, that go on in Courſes which their Bibles do forbid them; how few muſt we reckon in their right Wits and ſober?

For what ever deference men ſeem to have for Chriſtianity in the general, in thoſe particulars wherein it interfereth with their Inclinations; how light (alas!) do they make of it? In ſuch Caſes it is but too plain it bindeth them no more than Withes could *Sampſon*, and is inproductive as the Sun in Winter. This that *Heathen* in *Salvian* had ſo obſerved as to upbraid them with; their Goſpel (ſaith he) requireth them to be virtuous

tuous and holy, but they live most debauched and loosly; their Scriptures teach them sincerity and heavenly-mindedness, but they live in hypocrisie and covetousness; Christ commandeth them to be humble and self-denying, but they live in pride and all extravagance.

If ever People were cordial, serious and in earnest *Christians*, one would think it should be when *Christianity* was first planted; then the times were dangerous, and no secular Interest could be served by an outward owning it, then this Sect was every where spoken against, and in every City Bonds and Afflictions did abide them; so that nothing but purely Conscience could move men to the embracing it. And yet even then what sad miscarriages and complaints do we read of! At *Sardis* though they had a name to live, that was all; it is said that they were *dead*; and at *Corinth* some would be drunk even at receiving the Holy Sacrament; among the *Thessalonians*, there were Brethren

that

that walked diſorderly; and at *Philippi* many walked ſo that Saint *Paul* could not ſpeak of them without weeping. To keep home in this Epiſtle, there is mention of a whole Countrey the great and populous Iſle of *Crete*, who though they had received the Faith of *Chriſtians*, in their Manners remained rank *Pagans* ſtill. They were Lyars before, and they continued as notorious Lyars ſtill; Gluttons before, and as ſottiſh Gluttons ſtill; Beaſts before, and as arrant beaſts ſtill; *Verſe* 13. of this *Chapter*, the Apoſtle affirmeth *this Teſtimony is true*: That Character their own *Epimenides* had given of the Place ſome hundred years before, fitted it as well then; although they had gotten a better Religion, yet no whit better Converſation: So they are branded in the Text, *They profeſs that they know God, but in Works they deny him: being abominable and diſobedient, and to every good Work reprobate.*

And O how happy were it that there were none but theſe deſerved to be ſo ill

ſpoken

ſpoken of! that there were none beſides that could be as juſtly charged ſo! but that every one of us in this, and all in every place that call upon the Name of the Lord Jeſus, both theirs and ours, might walk according to his rule!

To promote this ſame thing, I have from the Text, theſe three material Propoſitions to diſcourſe to you.

The firſt is, that that Knowledge which we *Chriſtians* have of God, is a moſt ſtrict obligation to a pious and holy life.

The ſecond, that notwithſtanding this, it is uſual for them who have been inſtructed in it, and acknowledge it, *to be abominably diſobedient, and to good Works reprobate.*

The third that the profeſſion of them that are ſo, is judged by God but a ſelf-contradiction; he reckoneth that *they deny him.*

Theſe are the ſeverals, which, as though God did entreat you by me, *I pray you in Chriſt's ſtead*, with ſuch wiſdom and ſeriouſneſs as you ſhow in the Affairs of this World, you would be pleaſed to conſider of.

The firſt of theſe Propoſitions is, that that Knowledge which we *Chriſtians* have of God is a moſt ſtrict obligation to a pious and holy life. This is made the aggravation and wonder of this peoples being ſo bad, that they had the Goſpel Knowledge of God: that all theſe Revelations ſhould not influence them, ſeemed amazing and almoſt monſtrous.

What ſmall diſcoveries of God have overawed and governed men, when they have been attended to! What excellent Perſons were *Abel* and *Enoch*, *Noah* and *Sem*, *Melchiſedech* and *Job*, *Abraham* and the Patriarchs, before the Law was given! To theſe, beſides an obſcure promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, he diſcovered little beſides the reality of his own exiſtence, by ſome occaſional appearings; and yet

yet how devout and circumſpect, how upright and conſcientious, did this ſingle notion make them!

But with how many more things, and with how much more advantage are we now acquainted! That *Chriſtianity* may make *Archimedes*'s Challenge, give it but where it may ſet its foot, and it is enough to move the whole Earth, grant it but to be true, and no man is able to reſiſt that ſtrength of wiſdom, and reaſon with which it ſpeaketh to him.

Hence I believe, it is, that ſo many among us (more ſure in proportion than any other Religion in the World) are ſo induſtrious and ſolicitous in ſearching and catching at Cavils and Objections, to perſwade themſelves and others to be Atheiſts. Theſe principles more than any other make men uneaſie in the wayes of wickedneſs, and they ſee there is no way to looſe themſelves from the Bonds of it, but by cutting it in pieces.

There are two things wherein this Religion hath the advantage of any, in bringing men to righteouſneſs and goodneſs.

One in reſpect of the purity of its Precepts.

Another in reſpect of the importance of its Motives.

A firſt advantage our Religion hath this way, is in the purity of its Precepts. So exact and accurate it is in its injunctions, that our Saviour asketh his Diſciples, *what they did more than others?* Implying that his Inſtitution did require it.

There is no Religion beſides, but did ſo far comply with the cuſtomary corruptions of the place for which it was calculated, as to connive at ſomething or other which in it ſelf was not ſo juſtifiable, Some allowed Polygamy, and others Fornication; ſome making War barely for enlargement of Dominion,

nion, and others Theft it ſelf, if done ſo dexterouſly, that they were not taken in the Fact: not only in thoſe which were of human invention, but even in that which was inſtituted by God himſelf, and delivered to the *Jews* by *Moſes*; our Saviour giveth an inſtance, *Matth.* 19. 8. wherein he permitted ſomething *becauſe of the hardneſs of their hearts, which himſelf had no pleaſure in.*

But here is no ſuch Indulgence and Relaxation: there is nothing excellent which we are not enjoyned, nothing unſeemly which we are not prohibited. It calleth us to be *perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect*, and taketh care *the whole man be without ſpot or blemiſh.*

It is a Book wherein all our Members are written, and it giveth directions for every one of them. The Eye is written here, here is a Covenant for that; the Tongue is written here, here is a Bridle for that; the Eare is written here, here is a Voyce for that; the

Foot is written here, here is a Lantern for that. But why ſpeak I of the outward man? The Laws of men have took tolerable care of that: there is the Heart of man, that great and wide Sea, wherein the Leviathan playeth under water, that Wilderneſs of wickedneſs wherein are beaſtly creeping things innumerable: and for the Laws of men to attempt upon this, were as wild a Project as to threaten the Ayr, or ſcourge the Helleſpont. But (loe!) this goeth even thus far, it ranſacketh all the ſecret corners of darkneſs, and chaſtiſeth Vanity in but the Imagination: it pierceth *to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit, of the Joynts and Marrow, and is a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart: and what manner of Perſons ought we then to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs*, who have ſolemnly vowed theſe ſhall be the Rules we will ſet our ſelves to walk by!

Beſides the ſtricteſt Precepts, in the ſecond place it hath the moſt important Motives. It propoſeth the moſt tranſcendent rewards, and

and the moſt ſtupendious puniſhments; it ſetteth before us the greateſt Bleſſings, and the dreadfulleſt curſes our Natures are capable of. *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory, and honour and immortality it* promiſeth *eternal life: but to them who are contentious and do not obey the Truth*, it threatneth *indignation and wrath, tribulation and an endleſs anguiſh.* If theſe things will not work on men, what can? If theſe things do not prevail with them, what will? How can the two governing paſſions of the mind, our hope and our fear be aſſaulted in a higher manner?

I grant this Notion of an eternal retribution is no ſuch peculiar of the *Chriſtian*, but that the *Gentile* Theology made uſe of it too: but then they derived it from ſuch weak Authority, built it upon ſuch uncertain reaſonings, enlarged it with ſuch fabulous circumſtances, as rendered it but very doubtful and ſuſpicious. And though the *Jews* had a ſurer word of Prophecy to rely on, yet even their intimations of it, cannot but be confeſ-

ſed to be very obſcure, when it is remembred, that the *Sadducees*, a great and learned part of their Doctors, who believed the Books of *Moſes*, did yet deny all future being, and ſaid there *was no Reſurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit.*

And this being the condition of the World while the coming of our Lord, it may be the leſs wondered, if we find men then more ſtubborn and ſtiff-necked, untractable and hard to be broken of their own ways. The Apoſtle ſpeaketh as if God did ſcarce expect any other from them; the *times of this Ignorance* (ſaith he) *God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.* Why, did he not command it always? Before the Flood? Under the Law? To the King of *Egypt?* To the People of *Niniveh?* Yes, but *now, now that life and immortality is brought to light*, to as much light as at this diſtance it is capable of, *by the Goſpel*, now in a peculiar manner, now upon our own account, as we love our ſelves he hath obliged us to it. No

man

man ever *yet hated his own fleſh*, but elſe we ſhould ſhow our ſelves to hate our own fleſh and ſpirits both.

So that one would be apt to think, ſurely the People of theſe perſwaſions muſt be of moſt exemplary converſations; ſeeing they know ſo much dependeth upon it, *they will not walk as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds.* So it might be preſumed indeed by Strangers, and them that have no experience: but thoſe that have, ſee it is quite otherwiſe: and that notwithſtanding all our Principles wee degenerate into as wicked Practices as other men. This is that which is here bewailed in the Text, and is

The next particular I am to ſpeak to, that they who do profeſs to know and acknowledge God, according as he hath revealed himſelf in his Goſpel, were yet *abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good Work reprobate.*

It is not only Enemies that reproach it, then it might have been born; neither they that avow a hatred to it, that magnifie themſelves againſt it, then it had been no wonder; but it is betrayed by them that kiſs it, and wounded in the houſe of its Friends.

In the Primitive Times it was too uſual to ſee *Chriſtians* in the skins of wild beaſts; but now it is much more uſual to ſee wild beaſts in the skins of *Chriſtians*: they who call themſelves by this holy name wallowing in all ſenſuality and brutiſhneſs. *How is the faithful City turned an Harlot! her Silver become Droſs, her Wine mixt with Water! They that name the name of Chriſt will not depart from iniquity,* and the Viſible Members of his Body are Inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin. The charge need not be aggravated or enlarged: for I am perſwaded none of theſe things are hid from you before whom I ſpeak; for they are not done in a corner: and the name of God is blaſphemed among the *Gentiles* through you, as it is written.

But

But is it not ſtrange that a Mother ſo fair and lovely, ſhould bring forth Children ſo miſhapen and deformed? That when ſuch good ſeed as this is ſown, the Field ſhould be over-run with Tares and Weeds? but there are two things much of it may be aſcribed to.

One ſurely is the peculiar nature of its Commandments: conſiſting not in weak and beggarly Elements, after the Rudiments of this World, but in holineſs and righteouſneſs, Duties material and ſubſtantial. Rituals and external obſervations are readily complyed with: though they may be a little irkſome and troubleſom in themſelves, yet being conſiſtent with their luſts, men are not difficult to be brought to them; but practical and moral injunctions which reſtrain and fetter their Inclinations they are more impatient of: this is a galling yoke upon the neck, neither our Fathers nor we are able to bear. If that obſervation be true (as I am very much afraid it is) that there is no Religion in the World ſo careleſly obſerved by its Proſelytes as ours:

not the *Jewiſh*, not the *Turkiſh*, not the *Pagan*, this muſt be aſſigned a cauſe of it: theirs are moſtly Schemes of bodily exerciſes and ceremonials, whereas univerſal goodneſs and virtue are the indiſpenſibles of *Chriſtianity*.

Thoſe Sects among us that have dwindled the Profeſſion into Mint and Cummin, magnified fantaſtick ſmall Wares inſtead of the great things of the Law, have their followers obſequious enough to them. The *Enthuſiaſts* can promote among their Admirers *ſowre Looks and wild Opinions:* the *Separatiſts* prevail with their Tribe to *keep Days and Conventicles:* the *Quakers* make their Diſciples go *plain, and not ſtir their Hats:* the *Formaliſts* put their People upon *Religious Phraſes and moſt Technical Duties*. If men have but ſo much ſuperſtition, and ſo little reaſon as to believe theſe things will commend them to God, they will be well enough contented with the terms: they may be done without the deſtruction of any reigning ſin; the proud and the covetous, the wanton and the diſhoneſt,

neſt, the rebel and the Hypocrite may be very zealous in them; and yet be proud and covetous, wanton and diſhoneſt, rebels and hypocrites ſtill: but to pluck out the right eye, and to deny our ſelves; to abſtain from all appearance of evil, and keep our ſelves unſpotted from the World, this is cutting againſt the grain, and laying the Axe not to the boughs of the tree, but the very root: this is for *Jordan* to be driven backward and flay the *Ethiopian* while he is alive. *Laertius* giveth this account why the *Epicureans* kept ſo much cloſer to their Rule than the *Stoical* Philoſophers did to theirs: the former (ſaith he) enjoyned only what men had a mind to be, but the latter what they ought to be. This being the caſe here, it cannot be thought that any but they who are very ſincere and ſerious (which is the leaſt part of every Society) it cannot I ſay be thought that any but they who are very ſincere and ſerious, ſhould ſo painfully oppoſe themſelves as to endeavour it.

Add to this in the ſecond place the faintneſs and falſeneſs of mens faith. When this is real and active, genuine and vigorous; the hardeſt Sayings will be heard and received with chearfulneſs: but Multitudes call themſelves *Chriſtians*, not ſo much out of *choice* as *cuſtom*; upon the account of their Conſciences, as of their Countries. Elſe what meaneth our Saviour to ask, *Luke* 18. 8. Whether *when the Son of man cometh he ſhall find Faith on the Earth?* Who would think there could be any doubt at all of that at the ſecond time of his coming? *Then the Jews will be called, and the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in; then he will have the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion*; and doth he ſcruple whether there would be any Faith in the World after all this? So it ſeemeth, he that knew what was in man, notwithſtanding all this, intimateth there would be but ſmall ſtore of it: heapes of them who did outwardly profeſs it, would in truth have no more ſenſe of it than very *Pagans*.

He

He that ſeeth two men of equal ſtature walking, one upon riſing ground, the other upon plain, at a diſtance might think one much taller than the other; whereas were that other in his place he would be thought to have the ſame advantage, and were they both upon a Level, it is in truth in neither. So it is if we compare *Heathens* with many formal *Chriſtians*, theſe *ſeem* to have that Faith in Chriſt which they have not: but it is only the *bank*, the place of their Nativity, where they ſtand that makes the difference; were they upon the others *Ground* they would be as formal in the Profeſſion of *Paganiſm*, and the other, if they had their *ſtanding* might be as orderly in owning of the *Scriptures*.

Now though men are not debauched into that Rank Infidelity, as to blaſpheme and droll their Religion; yet if they are beſotted into that empty formality, as not heartily to believe or conſider it, what can be expected? Can painted fire expel the cold?

Or

Or a dead Stump, Bud and Bloſſom? How can the Superſtructure ſtand if the Foundation be not ſound? And this is the other account why ſo many who have been baptized into the Name of Jeſus do live after ſuch a manner as they do, wallowing in ſuch foul Pollutions.

But is it fit that ſuch as theſe ſhould uſurp ſo honourable a Title? What have they to do to take this Name into their mouths, who hate to be reformed? Is it not a wild miſnomer to ſtyle ſuch Wretches as theſe *Chriſtians*? Is not this for *men* to call the things that are not as if they were? So the Author and Finiſher of our Faith reckoneth it: the Profeſſion of ſuch is judged by him a manifeſt and apparent ſelf-contradiction, he hath pronounced *that they deny him.* And that is the laſt Particular of the Text, the great thing I deſigned to inſiſt upon, that they whoſe Actions are vitious and abominable, though they do retain a verbal Profeſſion of Chriſt yet really renounce him. They whoſe

whoſe Works were not anſwerable, though they did pretend to acknowledge God, are here affirmed to deny him. *They profeſs that they know God, but in Works they deny him.*

None of the Diſſenting Parties among us need ſo vainglorioufly and ambitiouſly have commended themſelves to the World under the diſtinguiſhing and affected Titles of the *Believers*, the *Saints*, the *Godly*, and the like: the name of *Chriſtian* includeth all, and whoever taketh it upon him without theſe qualifications in ſome meaſure, doth but *lye to the Holy Ghoſt. Jeſus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye*, that boaſt them, and are ſo much unlike them? Whatever they may call themſelves, let all the workers of Iniquity know aſſuredly, the God whom we ſerve will find another name for them. It is not unworthy your obſervation that Addreſs of the Prophet *Iſaiah* 1. 10. *Hear the Word of the Lord ye Rulers of Sodom, give eare unto the Law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Sodom* and *Gomorrah* had been deſtroyed near

a thouſand years before, and doth the Prophet make Exhortations to them now? No, in the firſt Verſe of the Chapter you may read to whom his Errand was, *The Viſion which he ſaw concerning Judah and Jeruſalem*, God's peculiar People in Covenant, theſe were they he was to ſpeak to: yes, but when theſe were corrupted and gone away backward, when theſe had broken the yoke and were altogether become filthy, for all their Priviledges and making their boaſt of the Law, for all their crying, *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, and ſaying within themſelves, *we have Abraham to our Father*; they ſhall not be called by the name of *Iſrael*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* is much fitter for them. After this manner Saint *Paul* ſpeaking of unnatural Prodigals that walked diſorderly, and not after Godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. telleth us, *If any provide not for his own, eſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, he hath denyed the Faith.* Why are there no ſuch ill Husbands within the Pale of the Church, who ſo they may riot and rant themſelves, care not what becometh

becometh of their comfortless and ruined Families? no doubt, abundance: but deeds have a Language more significant than Words, and their carriage *denyed him*, though their Tongues were silent, or should say the contrary. And accordingly, when Ecclesiastical Authority was thought fit to be exercised, the Church of God dealt with them; for her own reputation cutting them off by Censures, and *denying* them her Communion.

If it be asked what difference then between these, and open *Infidels*? It must be granted that there is one: but it is only this, They *deny* God in their *Understandings*, *these deny* him in their *Wills*; *they deny* the *Doctrine* of the Gospel, *these deny* the *Precepts* of it; *they deny the Truth* of Divine Revelations, *these deny* their *Goodness*. Of the two, the former is in the better condition, and much more excusable; because they act according to their own Principles, but these will be condemned out of their own Mouths.

But if every *evil work* be a *denying of God*, who can truly be ſaid to confeſs him? *For there is none but doth evil, no not one.* God (ſaith Saint *Hierom*) is Omniſcience, Juſtice, Providence, Truth: by ſinning in ſecret we deny his Omniſcience, by any diſhoneſty in dealing we deny his Juſtice, by Diſcontent and Murmuring we deny his Providence, by any Lye or Diſſimulation we deny his Truth.

But yet we may warrantably ſay, it is not every one that ſometimes doth ſome Work which is evil that is here intended: It is not every miſcarriage or ſingle act of ours that is charged ſo highly: but ſome ſins and ways of ſinning there are, ſo inconſiſtent with the Worthineſs of this Holy Calling, and the Power of Godlineſs, that they who do ſuch things, may, muſt have this pronounced on them.

Having not a diſtinct Hiſtory of theſe *Cretians*, and their manners, we cannot ſay what

what all *those works* were in particular, which moved the Apostle in the Text to declare this of them, that they did *deny God:* but there are two great ones lye plain before us in the Context, and though I wave some others that are also hinted, I cannot pass over these in silence; they are so near the complexion of the present days, and may be of so much use to us in teaching us to judge our selves.

One of these sins they are upbraided with is that of *Sensuality.* The Country they lived in was so plentiful and fruitful, that in *Pliny* and *Solinus* it is called *Macaros* and *Macaronesas*, the *blessed and happy* Island: their Wine so rich and generous, that among the Poets it hath obtained the Epithet of ἀμπλοέσιν.

This was an occasion of their being so ryotous and luxurious, so debauched and vicious, that proverbially with other Nations they had the name of *slow bellies.*

Such courſes as theſe very often bring men to *deny God in Word.* The Soul of man, though it cannot be prejudiced in its Eſſence, yet by the abuſe of our Bodys, it may much in its operations: and experience ſhoweth us, that impurity and intemperance, phyſically ſo wrong the brain, as to indiſpoſe it for its higheſt and moſt noble Uſes. Wherefore the *Jews* among their qualifications of a Prophet make Dyet and Chaſtity, two ſpecial ones, concluding no man capable of divine and ſpiritual Knowledge without them. It is a good obſervation of *Lapide*, that after the Flood, when *Noah* had planted Vines, and men altered their feed from Herbs to Fleſh, that then preſently they turned Idolaters, and the Worſhip of God decayed. And I would leave to the impartial conſideration of the ſober, whether that ſo great and miſchievous inundation of *Scepticiſm* in our own Nation, be not much of it owing to ſuch kind of ſins having been ſo very rife among us? for as it is very ſeldom ſeen, that any man is an *Atheiſt*, who was not firſt an *Epicure*; ſo I think

think it is almoſt as ſeldom that any man hath been long an *Epicure*, who is not at laſt an *Atheiſt*. But where through a more happy Mechaniſm of the Head, it doth not proceed ſo far as to *Speculative Atheiſm*, yet it is in it ſelf *Practical Atheiſm*. Theſe things are ſo expreſly againſt all the plain Commands and clear Revelations of God; ſo oppoſite to that Moderation and Sobriety, Modeſty and Mortification that he requireth of us, that they who did *ſuch works*, though they made an external *Profeſſion of God*, upon this ſcore, in rhe Text are ſaid to *deny him*.

The other ſin I chooſe to inſtance in, that they are branded with, is their *Profaneneſs* in contemning all Inſtructions and Admonitions given to reclaim them. They were *rebuked ſharply*, but they did not *amend* upon it: *Paul* had *planted* them, and *Titus watered* them, but there was no increaſe. They are called not only *evil*, but *beaſts* too; as headſtrong and unperſwadable, as inconſiderate and unreaſonable, under all the counſels and warnings of God.

A ſad caſe! in all other things, where it is their intereſt, men are eaſily prevailed with, but here though it be their everlaſting one, ſo deaf and unconcerned they are, that the likelieſt Meſſengers God ever employed, ſcarce could *ſow in hope.* We find them ſo heartleſs when they have been delivering their Meſſages, that with abrupt diſturbances they oft give over their Auditors, and in Melancholy Apoſtrophes apply themſelves to the moſt ſenſeleſs and inanimate Creatures. *O Altar, Altar hear the Word of the Lord*, ſaid the man of God, though *Jeroboam* ſtood by: as if thoſe *Stones* were as like to relent, or be made impreſſion on, as him he had to deal with. *Hear O Heavens*, ſaith the Prophet *Iſaiah*, and *give eare O Earth, for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken*: as if the *Heavens*, as high as they were, were as likely to hear; as if the *Earth*, as dull as it was were as likely to conſider, as the People he was ſent to. *Hear O ye Mountains the Lord's Controverſie*, ſaith the Prophet *Micha*, and *ye ſtrong Foundations of the Earth*, nothing in the Earth ſo immoveable

immoveable as the *Mountains*, nothing in the *Mountains* ſo impenitrable as their *Foundations*; and yet the *Mountains*, the very *Foundations of thoſe Mountains* are addreſſed to, as if they were as apprehenſive of *God's Controverſie* as the great ones there ſpoken to.

But leſt the commonneſs of ſuch things ſhould diminiſh your apprehenſions of the hainouſneſs of them, I muſt ſo far magnifie my office, as to tell you, that God who converſeth not with us immediately, but by his Officers; interpreteth what is *done unto theſe*, as *done unto himſelf*; and as in *hearing theſe*, you *hear him*; ſo in *deſpiſing theſe* you *deſpiſe him* alſo, and they that did ſo, whatſoever they *profeſſed* of their owning and acknowledging him, are here expreſly ſaid to *deny him. They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him.*

And now I muſt take leave to ſpeak to you, as Saint *Paul* to the *Corinthians*: *Theſe things have I in a Figure transferred* to *Crete*

and to that People *for your ſakes*, *that you might learn from them not to think of your ſelves above what is meet and written.* It is ſome happineſs that the former part of the Character is true of us, that we yet *profeſs that we know God*, that the Blaſphemies of thoſe, whoſe Words do eate as doth a Canker, have not proceeded ſo far, but that we retain this ſtill: but yet notwithſtanding, the later part of the Character is ſo true too, that I fear there are few kinds of *works wherein men can deny him*, that are not done among us. *O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night for the Tranſgreſſions of the Daughter of my People! O that I had in the Wilderneſs a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my People, and go from them! for they are all Adulterers, an Aſſembly of treacherous men, they proceed from evil to evil.* Spare me the ſad task of particular enumerations, by conſulting your Conſciences, or your Obſervations: *to me indeed it would be grievous*, and to you, I think, unneceſſary. And that which aggravateth

gravateth the evil of all these Works is, they are grown so common and fashionable, that we are become even *past feeling*. Saint *Peter denying* his Master one day but in words, and that upon surprize too, *went forth and wept bitterly*; but here is *denying* of him every day in *works* upon contrivance and deliberation; and instead of any thing of this nature, making a meer *mock* of it.

Far be it from me to involve all I speak to in this black Catalogue, *Surely the fear of the Lord is in this Place too*, and there are among you whose Works are not only commendable, but exemplary. Yea, even among those that *deny him* there are *degrees* too: of *some we must have compassion, making a difference*. While others deny him universally in all their Works, being filled with all unrighteousness; some only haltingly in this or that particular, that they are carried away captive with: while others deny him with an audacious obstinat malignity, some do it not without a more hopeful inward reluctancy:

but yet theſe alſo muſt by no means flatter themſelves, that becauſe they deny him not ſo groſly as others, therefore they do not deny him at all. No, as Saint *James* ſaith, *he that ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point is guilty of all:* So he that profeſſeth God in his whole Works, and yet wilfully and habitually denieth him in *one branch* is in the ſame caſe: For, as he argueth, *he that hath ſaid thou ſhalt not kill, hath ſaid alſo thou ſhalt not commit adultery.*

I ſhall draw to a concluſion with an Hiſtorical remark of the People here ſpoken of, Continuing ſo ſcandalouſly wicked as you have heard under all their calls and exhortations to Repentance. It pleaſed God to inflict from time to time ſeveral ſevere and fearful Judgments on them; the time would fayl me to tell you of that depopulating drought, for above thirty years together, they had in the time of *Conſtantine*; that cruel Invaſion by the *Saracens* who were in *Spain*, in the time of *Michael Balbus*: the Famines,

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the Diſeaſes, the amazing Calamities almoſt of all ſorts that from time to time they were viſited with, but hardning their hearts under them all; in our own Age, after the gaining the reſt of their Country by a fierce and bloody War, and a tedious Siege of their *Metropolis* longer than that of *Troy*, it is at this day wholly in the poſſeſſion of the *Turks*, and (the name it is better known by) *Candia* is now taken. Now their Candleſtick is removed, and their Glory is departed: Now their Churches, they were ſo negligent in frequenting, are turned into *Moſchs*, and that Religion they would not practiſe, now it is coſt and danger to them, ſo much as to profeſs.

God grant this may never be the caſe of the Iſland we live in! far be this from us, O Lord, O may this never be unto us! I hope our Iniquity is not yet ſo full that ſuch a Decree as this ſhould have come forth againſt us. But I cannot but beſpeak you as God did his People of old upon ſuch occaſion,

Jer. 7. 12. *Go ye now to my place, which was in Shiloh, where I ſet my name at the firſt, and ſee what I did to it for the wickedneſs of my People Iſrael.* Let us, who have ſo notoriouſly degenerated from the ſame Religion they made profeſſion of; Let us, who deny God in Works, by all thoſe wayes, and more, than we can find, that ever they did; Let us, who have had Line upon Line, Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Precept upon Precept, to awaken us; Let us who have had ſo many aſtoniſhing Judgments in our own Memories; a Civil War, a Murdered King, a Ruined Church, an Arbitrary State, a Devouring Plague, a Conſuming Fire; and yet have not returned unto the Lord, but rebel yet more and more: Let us I ſay, *go to this place and ſee* what God at laſt hath done to them. And if we are not come to that paſs as to *deny his Providence*, ſaying, *the Lord doth neither good nor evil*, but all is Chance and Fortune; Let us not dare to go on in denying him a hearty and ſincere obedience: as knowing aſſuredly, that if we do,

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our ſin alſo at laſt, will aſſuredly find us out, ſo that a man ſhall ſay as verily as there is a reward for the righteous: So *Verily there is aGod that judgeth in the Earth.*

Seeing then that we have ſuch fear, we uſe great plaineneſs of Speech. Whether it will be as Rain falling upon the Rock, or whether as Seed that is ſown in good Ground. Whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear; Being not for us to know, I ſhall end with that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* 2. 12, 13. *If we deny him, he alſo will deny us. If we believe not, he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himſelf.*

Now to him who is the King, Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only Wiſe God (whom we all profeſs to know) *be aſcribed by us, by all our Nation, by the whole Church Militant here on Earth, All the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

FINIS.